

House Resolution 253

By: Representatives Gardner of the 57th, Drenner of the 86th, Morgan of the 39th, Ashe of the 56th, Jones of the 44th, and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing National Eating Disorders Awareness Week and urging the Division of Public
2 Health of the Department of Human Resources to undertake certain related studies; and for
3 other purposes.

4 WHEREAS, anorexia, bulimia, and compulsive overeating are problems which are
5 misunderstood, stigmatized, underfunded, and undertreated; and

6 WHEREAS, estimates are that 10 million Americans suffer from eating disorders, including
7 9 million girls and women and 1 million boys and men; and

8 WHEREAS, anorexia is linked to an 18 fold increase in the risk of death, with up to 20
9 percent of sufferers dying of malnutrition and suicide, and is also the psychiatric disorder
10 with the highest mortality rate; and

11 WHEREAS, eating disorders are associated with substantial psychological problems,
12 including depression, substance abuse, and suicide, and can lead to major medical
13 complications, including cardiac arrhythmia, cognitive impairment, certain cancers,
14 osteoporosis, infertility, and, most seriously, death; and

15 WHEREAS, our "best and brightest girls" are the most vulnerable to eating disorders with
16 90 percent of sufferers being adolescent girls; and

17 WHEREAS, eating disorders cut across race, color, gender, and socioeconomic categories;
18 and

19 WHEREAS, eating disorders are increasing in younger age groups with children as young
20 as seven years old suffering; and

1 WHEREAS, 40-60 percent of high school girls diet, 13 percent of high school girls purge,
2 30-40 percent of junior high girls worry about weight, and 40 percent of nine-year old girls
3 have dieted; and

4 WHEREAS, genetic, social, familial factors, and media pressures are all known to be related
5 to eating disorders; and

6 WHEREAS, there is little federal funding for eating disorder education and research on
7 eating disorders, with the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) allocating only
8 1 percent of its overall research budget for eating disorders in 1997 and a percentage of this
9 money supporting research on obesity and diabetes; and

10 WHEREAS, many insurance companies disallow or limit reimbursements for eating
11 disorders, forcing doctors to discharge patients with anorexia nervosa too early, placing
12 patients in life-threatening situations; and

13 WHEREAS, necessary inpatient treatment for eating disorders can cost up to \$10,000.00 per
14 week and require a several months' hospital stay; and

15 WHEREAS, early intervention is crucial and Atlanta has one of the few organizations
16 dedicated to early detection, education, and prevention through the Eating Disorders
17 Information Network's School Outreach Program; and

18 WHEREAS, the intense concern about childhood obesity can serve to stigmatize overweight
19 children, and dieting has shown to be dangerous to children, leading to binge eating,
20 anorexia, and bulimia; and

21 WHEREAS, eating disorders should be taken as seriously as the obesity epidemic and treated
22 as the public health crisis they have become and government should take a proactive role in
23 prevention education regarding all forms of eating disorders, including binge eating and
24 extreme dieting, and make access to treatment available for those already suffering with
25 eating disorders; and

26 WHEREAS, the House of Representatives is concerned with preserving and protecting the
27 health of the citizens of Georgia.

1 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
2 the members of this body recognize February 19-28, 2005, as National Eating Disorders
3 Awareness Week, so deemed by the Eating Disorders Information Network as "Listen to
4 Your Body Week."

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Division of Public Health of the Department of
6 Human Resources is urged to undertake a study of the public health impact of eating
7 disorders in the State of Georgia and the need for programs or policies to enhance education,
8 awareness, detection, and prevention of the disease in the general population.

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Division of Public Health of the Department of
10 Human Resources is urged to undertake a study of the conditions, needs, issues, and
11 problems mentioned above or related thereto and recommend any actions or legislation as
12 necessary or appropriate.

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
14 and directed to transmit an appropriate copy of this resolution to the Division of Public
15 Health of the Department of Human Resources.